United Nations S/PV.8112

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8112th meeting

Wednesday, 22 November 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Cardi	(Italy)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Lie Cheng
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermudez Alvarez

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Sixteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2017/880)

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2367 (2017) (S/2017/881)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

17-39384 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Sixteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2017/880)

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2367 (2017) (S/2017/881)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Jan Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, and Major Anna Patrono, Arma dei Carabinieri Team Leader of the First Female Policing Course in Baghdad.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/880, which contains the sixteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013), as well as to document S/2017/881, which contains the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2367 (2017).

I now give the floor to Mr. Jan Kubiš.

Mr. Kubiš: I would like to start by congratulating the Iraqi Government and people on their historic victory against the Da'esh terrorist group and its so-called caliphate. On 17 November, the Iraqi security forces fully recaptured the Rawa district, the last remaining area under Da'esh control in Iraq, although some mopping-up operations continue. Iraqis took back their country through the heroism and sacrifices of the Iraqi security forces, including the popular mobilization forces, working alongside the Peshmerga and tribal forces, supported by neighbouring countries and the Global Coalition against Da'esh.

This victory has come at a very high cost. Many thousands of fighters and civilians have been killed or wounded, leaving behind thousands of widows and orphans, hundreds of thousands of brainwashed children deprived of a proper education and entire cities in ruins, while some 6 million people have been displaced from their homes in several waves. Many thousands of people from both Muslim and minority communities — particularly women and girls — have been exterminated or enslaved by Da'esh in inhuman ways as a result of war crimes, crimes against humanity and possibly even genocide.

I should also underline the sacrifices of those who have been selflessly sheltering millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs), including in Kurdistan. Our condolences today go to all the victims of the war against Da'esh. Da'esh is down but not yet out — even in Iraq. The military victory is only one component of a complex battle. Only by defeating its takfirist ideology, cutting off its external support and addressing the causes that have prompted so many Iraqis to join or tolerate Da'esh can it finally be terminated. I encourage the global coalition against Da'esh, including the countries of the region and the wider international community, to continue both military and non-military efforts — and especially by increasing the latter — aimed at helping Iraq to ensure Da'esh's permanent, sustainable defeat.

In Iraq, while continuing humanitarian assistance, priority must be given to facilitating the speedy and voluntary return of IDPs under conditions of safety and security, as well as to demining, stabilization, reconstruction and rehabilitation, which will also help minorities and create the conditions needed for their safe and sustainable future in a post-Da'esh Iraq. An international conference planned for February in Kuwait, on the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq, should affirm the lasting commitment of the international community, including the countries of the region. Those efforts should complement support for security-sector reform, aimed at increasing the country's ability to fully enforce law and order against the continued presence of the multitude of armed groups outside State control, including criminal gangs, militias and tribal elements.

Just as the country is beginning to breathe a sigh of relief at the defeat of the Da'esh terrorists, many long-standing unresolved issues, until now overshadowed by the urgency of fighting Da'esh, are once again coming to the fore. Prominent among them are the tensions between the central Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government, prompted by complaints on both sides regarding deficiencies in implementing the

Constitution. The response of the Kurdistan regional authorities was to hold an independence referendum on 25 September — against the will of Baghdad and the advice of the regional countries and the international community — in the Kurdistan region and the disputed territories under its control since 2014.

Challenged by the referendum, the Government of Iraq took determined steps to re-establish federal authority over its external border-crossing points, the international airports in the Kurdistan region and the disputed territories, as well as over oil exports. On 16 October, federal security forces launched operations in Kirkuk and proceeded rapidly through other disputed territories, going almost as far as the so-called green line of 2003. Although in most cases the withdrawal of Peshmerga forces from those areas took place in coordination with the Iraqi security forces, sporadic clashes did occur. Even now, however, control over some disputed areas and border crossings, including Fish Khabur, remains unresolved. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) received reports of civilian casualties, primarily from the Kurdish community in Kirkuk, Tuz Khurmatu and other areas. I welcome the measures taken by Prime Minister Al Abadi to enforce law and order through the federal forces in areas that have witnessed an increase in violence as a prerequisite for the mostly Kurdish IDPs to return to their homes. I also urge the competent authorities, both federal and of the Kurdistan region, to carry out prompt and impartial investigations into all incidents and to bring those responsible to justice.

On 6 November, the federal Supreme Court concluded that it did not find any provision in the Constitution authorizing the secession of any component of the federal system of the Republic of Iraq. On 20 November, the federal Supreme Court decided that the referendum was unconstitutional and that all of its results and effects should be cancelled. The Government of Iraq welcomed both decisions. On 14 November, the Kurdistan Regional Government confirmed its respect for the federal Supreme Court's interpretation of article 1 of the Iraqi Constitution, and thereby the unity of Iraq, pursuant to its decision of 6 November. Following the second verdict of the federal Supreme Court on 20 November, Kurdistan's Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani again affirmed his respect for the Constitution, noting that the federal Supreme Court's rulings are final and cannot be challenged.

UNAMI has repeatedly called on all sides to refrain from the threat or use of force and from inflammatory statements and confrontational steps. Our message is clear. All outstanding issues between the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government must be resolved through a constructive partnership dialogue aimed at arriving at sustainable solutions on the basis of the Constitution that will also guarantee the full constitutional rights of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and its people. Now that the issue of the referendum has found its constitutional resolution, UNAMI urges for the continuation of the high-level intergovernmental dialogue on military and security issues, in order to avoid confrontations during the deployment of federal forces in the disputed areas and to enable federal authority to be established over Iraq's external border crossings, including the international airports in the Kurdistan region, with the aim of enabling their reopening for international flights as soon as possible.

UNAMI also calls for an immediate start to negotiations with Government representatives on other key matters, such as the budget, salaries and oil exports. UNAMI has offered its support for such negotiations, should the parties request it. In the wake of the resignation letter received on 29 October from the-then Kurdistan Regional President, Masoud Barzani, the regional parliament promulgated a law that temporarily redistributed his presidential powers among the executive, legislative and judiciary. It has given Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani and his Deputy, Qubad Talabani, the heavy responsibility of finding a way out of the region's political, economic and social crisis and steering Baghdad-Erbil relations away from confrontation. For that, they will need the support of every sector of Kurdistani society and its political forces as the Regional Government works on solutions to the crisis.

UNAMI continues to engage with Iraqi political parties to advance national reconciliation and settlement, working with the Government of Iraq to identify key priorities and deliverables over the next few months in the run-up to the national and provincial elections in May. Social reconciliation, focused on the return of IDPs, is now a critical priority.

On 23 October, a new Board of Commissioners for the Independent High Electoral Commission was approved by the Council of Representatives. It was a major disappointment for Iraqi civil society and UNAMI that, for the first time, no women were appointed to the

Board. Elections for the Governorate councils and the Council of Representatives are scheduled to take place on 15 May 2018, in accordance with the Constitution, and the Constitution should be fully respected in this respect as well.

The elections will face a number of challenges, including the first-time use of new voting technology, the holding of two simultaneous elections, a tight timeline, pending provincial council and parliamentary elections laws, and security concerns, notably in the areas where internally displaced persons have returned to their homes. I urge that these challenges be resolutely addressed in the months to come. Otherwise, holding elections when parts of Iraq remain insecure and large numbers of people, particularly from the Sunni communities, continue to be displaced could cast doubts on the inclusiveness and credibility of the elections and thus the acceptability of its results both internally and abroad.

Humanitarian partners have reached more than 6 million Iraqis this year, including 2 million impacted by military operations in Mosul. The Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan has received 71 percent of the $985 million required for 2017. We ask partners to continue to make their generous contributions so as to ensure that the people who have suffered the most receive the assistance they need.

Through the Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), more than 1,460 projects have either been completed, are under development or are being implemented in 23 liberated cities and districts in Anbar, Salah al-Din, Diyala and Ninewa governorates. More than 95 per cent of all stabilization projects implemented under the Funding Facility are undertaken by the local private sector. We are committed to ensuring that the more than 200 projects under way in priority Christian and Yezidi towns are implemented as quickly as possible. In the year ahead, the UNDP estimates that $289 million is needed to stabilize priority locations in liberated areas, and we are appealing to donor countries to step forward to provide these urgently needed resources. Demining is a critical priority, and the United Nations Mine Action Service needs continued support as well.

On the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, the Government of Iraq is fully cognizant of its international and humanitarian obligations relating to the file. Since assuming a proactive role last year, the Iraqi Ministry of Defence has made impressive efforts, including through exploration and excavation, to identify additional grave sites. The long-awaited review report of the International Committee of the Red Cross was submitted to last week's forty-fifth Tripartite Committee meeting in Cyprus. It offers an exhaustive historical overview and technical assessment of all aspects of previous search efforts for burial sites, and makes concrete recommendations on prioritization and further exploration of specific locations. Members of the Tripartite Commission will work together to translate the recommendations into a plan of action.

In November, Alice Walpole, my newly appointed Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, took charge of this file in accordance with resolution 2107 (2013). I would like to thank former Deputy Special Representative Gyorgy Busztin for his excellent work, efforts and commitment to the file since the adoption of the resolution in 2013.

The President: I thank Mr. Kubiš for his comprehensive briefing.

I now give the floor to Major Patrono.

Major Patrono: It is a great pleasure and honour for me to attend this meeting, and I thank the Security Council for the opportunity to brief its members on Italy's commitment in the field of stability policing, a sector in which the *Carabinieri* have established themselves as one of the most innovative and reliable partners for international organizations, including the United Nations.

In April 2017, I had the honour to act as team leader during the first female policing course delivered by the *Carabinieri* for the Iraqi Federal Police in Baghdad. Indeed, the *Carabinieri* have been exercising a leadership role in the framework of Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq since 2015, when a task force was deployed to lead and coordinate all training initiatives for the Iraqi Federal Police. Our main mission is to enhance the capabilities of Iraq's police forces through training, advising and assisting them so that they can play a primary role in the stabilization of the country. The Train, Advise and Assist Task Force was recently renamed the "Police Task Force-Iraq" in order to emphasize the specificity of this contribution within the framework of the Global Coalition.

The Police Task Force-Iraq coordinates the training initiatives delivered to all religious and ethnic groups represented in the Iraqi Police. In this context, the respect for gender balance truly constitutes the backbone of the *Carabinieri* strategy in crisis management. The reason for this is simple: strengthening women's participation in the police and improving women's role and influence in post-conflict environments can dramatically improve the overall effectiveness of stabilization efforts, especially at the local level. This objective is achieved by performing a dedicated training for female police personnel through separate female policing courses. In total, in two courses performed in Baghdad in April and July, some 100 police personnel have already been trained, and our plan is to continue training many more in the coming months.

The main purpose of the first female policing course was to increase the knowledge and awareness of fundamental human rights in order to deliver a suitable training on gender-related law-enforcement techniques and tactical procedures. The course, which took place at the Civil Defence Training Centre in Baghdad over a two-week period, was specifically tailored to 40 Iraqi female police officers, warrant officers and non-commissioned officers.

Trainees took part in classes and lectures on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which we consider an essential precondition for every training initiative. Special attention was devoted to enhancing the ability to carry out investigations designed to counter sexual and gender-based violence, as well as crimes against the most vulnerable groups. This is a crucial point that I wish to emphasize — there is a direct correlation between the availability of well-trained, empowered female police officers and the ability of effectively counter sexual and gender-based violence.

The second part of the course was focused on increasing trainees' basic competence and skills in self-defence, search and handcuffing techniques, inter alia. There were also interactive debriefings and discussions to promote respect for professional ethical principles and the code of conduct. The increased efficiency, integration and interoperability of the female police officers we have trained are now confirmed by their successful deployment for the purposes of stabilizing areas liberated from Da'esh, especially at the local level.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that the Carabinieri strongly believe in the police training initiative in Iraq. We are of the view that the project has been a successful operational paradigm that we have also been able to apply to female police officers participating in Carabinieri training in Palestine, Djibouti and Somalia. With that in mind, I would also like to emphasize the innovative formula for stability policing that our Carabinieri in Iraq have adopted, driven by an inclusive approach and based on the goal of achieving long-term normalization, which has proved more effective when seen as an autonomous pillar of crisis-management operations and a catalyst for fostering lasting peace and stability.

On a final note, I would like to give special thanks to all of the women who have bravely pioneered the project and have worked tirelessly, painstakingly and with great sacrifice and commitment. Somebody asked us what we would bring back to Italy from the experience — as far as we are concerned, it has been seeing the desire to learn that shone in the eyes of our female students, the very mirrors of their souls.

The President: I thank Major Patrono for her briefing and the personal touches in it, as well as for the personal role that she has played in training female Iraqi security units.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Kubiš and Major Patrono for their informative briefings this morning, as well as for the important work that both the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Italian Carabinieri are doing in Iraq.

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly highlight UNAMI's recently concluded independent external assessment, whose results we welcome. The Council launched the pilot initiative in an effort to shake up the United Nations approach to management review and in support of the Secretary-General's reform agenda. The study marks the first-ever external assessment of a special political mission's management structures and resources with a view to ensuring that they are being used effectively to optimize mandate implementation.

This external third-party review, conducted by expert consultants from outside the United Nations system, provides excellent recommendations for improving efficiency and accountability in the field so

as to enable the Council to make more informed strategic decisions on UNAMI's mandate and strengthen the Mission's ability to deliver on its mandate effectively. The United States supports the work of the assessment team and the creative solutions that it has put forward to promote more effective coordination and burden-sharing between the Mission and the United Nations country team, enabling them to be more responsive to Iraqis' needs. We hope the Secretary-General will give careful consideration to the team's suggestions and recommendations when he decides how best to address UNAMI's management and resourcing challenges. In a spirit of transparency regarding this Council-mandated management product, the United States urges the Secretary-General to share the full report with the Council so as to illustrate the challenges that United Nations field offices face in carrying out their critical peacebuilding missions.

Mr. Bermúdez Alvarez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would once again like to thank Mr. Kubiš, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive and informative briefing and for the ongoing work that he and his team have been doing in an environment as complex as Iraq. I would also like to pay special tribute to Major Anna Patrono for sharing her very interesting experience in training the police corps in Iraq, and we congratulate her.

Uruguay recognizes the hard work that the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Special Representative have been doing in continued coordination with the Iraqi Government, making possible the close cooperation needed to tackle the multiple emergencies that they are facing at present. In that regard, the Security Council's confidence in its work and of the United Nations in Iraq generally was expressed in our unanimous vote in mid-July to extend UNAMI's mandate through resolution 2367 (2017).

I would like to begin by expressing sincere condolences on behalf of Uruguay to the victims' families and the Governments and peoples of Iraq and Iran in the wake of the earthquake on 12 November that left more than 500 dead and thousands injured near the border between the two countries. The resilience that the Iraqi people have shown so many times will surely also enable them to overcome that natural disaster as well.

We reiterate our congratulations to the Iraqi Government on its courage and its enormous effort during the military campaign to defeat Da'esh and drive it out of Iraq after enduring more than three years of unimaginable atrocities at its hands. That is a huge achievement for the international community as well as the Iraqi people and authorities, and an overwhelming victory over international terrorism. Uruguay hopes that this major victory represents a decisive step towards the ultimate overthrow of Da'esh, which has subjected the people under its control in Iraq and Syria to brutal attacks and slaughtered hundreds of innocent citizens in other countries. That victory should not make us lose sight of the very serious crimes committed by Da'esh fighters, who must not go unpunished. Resolution 2379 (2017), which the Council adopted exactly two months ago, has put measures in place to ensure accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity and possible genocide committed by Da'esh. Bringing its leaders and those mainly responsible for its crimes to justice will help to discredit Da'esh's image by exposing their atrocities and should have a deterrent effect on potential followers or imitators. However, we reiterate that the fight against this scourge must be in line with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and agreed on here at the United Nations, in order to prevent any excessive responses.

Da'esh did not emerge from a vacuum. It was rather the product of a chain of events, including the effects of the unfortunate 2003 invasion of Iraq and the sectarian civil war that the country endured in the years following the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime. That unstable situation was compounded by the ideological, financial, arms and human support provided by various countries in the region and beyond, at least at first. The liberation of Ramadi and Fallujah in 2016, the long and complex military campaign preceding the liberation of Mosul this year and the recent victories in Tal Afar and Hawija are only initial steps. While important, they are not enough to restore relative normality to Iraq. The Government has two major tasks that, with United Nations support, it must tackle immediately — rebuilding those cities and enabling its hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons to return home.

As we have always done, we commend the Iraqi Government for prioritizing the protection of civilians in its fight against terrorism, but it is now time to address the economic, social, health and psychological needs of the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis who have been terrorized for far too long. One of the main goals of the United Nations and UNAMI is to support the

Iraqi Government in its reform efforts and find long-term political solutions that will enable it to combat extremism and ensure that the country will be stable enough to avoid any recurrence of phenomena such as that of Da'esh. Iraqi leaders must continue to work to overcome their ongoing divisions and historical mistrust so that they can reach a broad national reconciliation agreement that will enable them to turn the page on the many years of suffering that the Iraqi people have endured as a result of interreligious and ethnic divisions. As we have seen with the conflict in Iraq and others on the Security Council's agenda, it is relatively simple to establish military coalitions to fight a common enemy. We must work in that spirit to establish coalitions for dealing with post-conflict issues as well, with a view to de-escalating and reducing the internal tensions that inevitably persist after military conflicts have ended.

For that reason, we are concerned about the referendum held by the Kurdistan Regional Government in September, which regrettably led to clashes not only with the Iraqi Government but also with other countries in the region with Kurdish populations. We encourage both parties to engage in constructive dialogue so as to settle their differences without endangering Iraq's stability, unity and territorial integrity and in a way that safeguards the rights of all the ethnic groups and minorities that have inhabited the region for centuries. We condemn yesterday's suicide attack in Tuz Khurmatu in Salah Al-Din province south of Kirkuk — where Arabs, Kurds and Turkmens all live together — in which more than 20 died and dozens were injured.

Iraq is now facing a new and crucial chapter in its history. The victory over Da'esh will not be enough if the authorities fail to make concrete progress in combating corruption, involving all segments of society in the political life of the country and ensuring the protection of the human rights of all of its citizens, including women. With the support of UNAMI, it is their job to carry out the reforms that have been planned so as to enable Iraq to become more modern, inclusive and peaceful.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI). We reiterate our support for his important work. We would also especially like to thank Major Anna Patrono for her briefing as well as for her presence today, and for showing the Council a clear example of effective cooperation and the strengthening of institutions in situations as complex as that in Iraq. We also appreciate the important work that UNAMI is doing in fulfilling its mandate, and we encourage its personnel to continue their progress in their dialogue and coordination efforts aimed at strengthening the peace and reconciliation process in Iraq.

We are pleased to see the successful campaigns that Iraqi security forces have been carrying out to liberate the people of Tall Afar, Akashat, Ana, Sharqat, Hawijah and Daquq from Da'esh control. We are also appreciate the priority that Iraqi security forces have given to protection measures for civilians and civil infrastructure in their military campaigns as they fight to definitively eradicate Da'esh from Iraq. We reiterate our sincere gratitude for the courage, sacrifice and determination that Iraqi security forces, and the Iraqi people as a whole, continue to show in their ongoing fight against terrorism on behalf of all of us.

We hope that the legislation and legal mechanisms required for the regional election processes planned for 2018 will be implemented in a participatory and inclusive manner and will enable elections to be held in a peaceful and orderly way to the benefit of the entire population. We believe that UNAMI's technical assistance will be very important to achieving that goal.

We are extremely concerned about the serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law reported by the Secretary-General. They include the atrocities that Da'esh continues to perpetrate in Iraq in the form of kidnappings, degrading treatment and torture, the recruitment of child combatants, the enslavement of more than 1,500 Yazidi women and the summary executions of civilians. The latter were discovered in August when the bodies of men, women and children were found in several mass graves in Mosul, in Ninawa governorate. In that regard, we support for the work that the Special Representative and the Iraqi Government are doing to establish an investigative team in accordance with resolution 2379 (2017), which will be key to identifying the perpetrators of such serious crimes and bringing them to justice, so that they can be duly investigated, prosecuted and punished to the fullest extent of the law.

We also regret the continuing asymmetric attacks that kill innocent civilians. During the period under discussion, 410 people, including women and children,

were reported killed and more than 600 wounded, 360 as a result of explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices. In our view, clearing and removing such devices and remnants are a crucial part of peacebuilding, since they enable the tasks of rebuilding and restoring public services and securing access to humanitarian assistance to begin. Above all, they enable displaced populations to return safely to their homes and resume their normal lives. In that regard, we would like to highlight the work being done by the United Nations Mine Action Service in Iraq. It has succeeded in removing more than 700 explosive devices in Mosul, thereby helping refugees and internally displaced persons to return safely. We thank the Secretary-General for including the subject of mine action in today's report (S/2017/881). We hope that in the future we will see a report focused specifically on the activities of the Mine Action Service, in accordance with paragraph 15 of resolution 2365 (2017).

We appreciate the determination and efforts of the Iraqi Government to identify disappeared Kuwaiti citizens and to identify and return the property stolen from them during the conflict in 1990 and 1991. We encourage the parties involved to continue to redouble their efforts to bring about concrete results and to follow through on the reconciliation process being carried out by Iraq and Kuwait.

Finally, it is important to reiterate that policies of regime change, intervention and interference in the internal affairs of States have been one of the main reasons for the destruction of Iraq's State institutions and for weakening its forces of law and order, thereby facilitating the rise of terrorism and extremism in the region with the regrettable consequences that still persist today.

Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Republic of Italy on its presidency of the Security Council for this month and thank it for its efforts in organizing the Council's work. We would also like to thank France for its efforts during its presidency of the Council last month. We welcome the briefing by Mr. Ján Kubiš, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), and we thank him and his team for the efforts and dedication that they have shown in Baghdad, New York and wherever they are needed. I would also like to welcome the briefing by Major Anna Patrono of Italy's Arma dei Carabinieri on her very positive experience with female police in Baghdad. My delegation also commends the constructive efforts of the Government of Italy to strengthen Iraqi capabilities in various fields, in particular with regard to the Iraqi security forces, the preservation of artefacts and the repair of the Mosul dam.

Iraq's heroic armed forces have achieved a historic victory that has put an end to the so-called State of terror and extremism throughout Iraq following the liberation of Kirkuk, Hawijah and other cities. With enormous sacrifices, our brave forces have also succeeded in regaining the city of Al-Qa'im after the liberation of the nearby city of Rawa. Today I want to congratulate our armed forces and our proud people, who made sacrifices for this great victory, and to pay tribute to all of the honourable men and women of the civilized world who have supported Iraq and its heroic forces in the fight against the terrorist gangs of Da'esh. This truly glorious victory was achieved while taking great care to ensure the safety of the civilians whom the terrorists had used as human shields, and with full respect for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. Our forces are still eliminating terrorist pockets in the desert of Anbar governorate, securing the border between Iraq and Syria and opening joint border points that will enable commercial activity between both States to begin again.

The Government and the people of Iraq are deeply grateful to all the States that have participated in the international coalition for fighting terrorism in Iraq, in particular the United States of America and the States members of the European Union, as well as to others that are not part of the international coalition. We thank them all for their help in confronting terrorism and for the military and logistical support they have provided to Iraq's security forces, in the context of respect for our sovereignty and territorial integrity, and in coordination with our security forces, in order to defeat the terrorist gangs of Da'esh.

The Iraqi Government will continue to be one of unity, working to enhance constructive dialogue in order to settle the issues outstanding between the federal Government and the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government. In any case, we cannot accept the unconstitutional decisions of the Regional Government and thereby surrender the unity of Iraq, which is guaranteed under our Constitution. In that regard, with a view to preserving the unity of Iraq's territory and people, our Council of Representatives voted to

totally reject the referendum in the Iraqi Kurdistan region and to commit the federal Government to taking measures to secure Iraq's unity under article 109 of the Iraqi Constitution. In addition, it decided to launch a serious dialogue aimed at dealing with any outstanding issues on the basis of article 1 of the Constitution, which stipulates that Iraq is a single State with a single sovereignty and cannot be partitioned.

In accordance with its responsibilities, the Iraqi Government requested the federal Supreme Court to issue a ruling rejecting the illegal referendum conducted by the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government on 25 September. The referendum represents a grave violation of the Iraqi Constitution, in particular with regard to the status of areas with peoples of various nationalities, ethnicities, sects and religions. The federal Supreme Court studied article 1 of the Constitution and explained that it and other articles affirm the unity of Iraq and that article 109 of the Constitution binds all federal Iraqi authorities to preserve and uphold that unity. The Supreme Court also stated that the Constitution does not include any text that would permit the secession of any parts of the country, as stipulated in article 116. On 20 November, the federal Supreme Court ruled that the referendum conducted in the Iraqi Kurdistan region on 25 September was unconstitutional, rendering its results null and void. That will require issuing a request to the Iraqi Kurdistan Government to respect and abide by that decision in accordance with the articles and provisions of the Iraqi Constitution, which governs the rights and responsibilities of all its components.

We would like to express our gratitude to all of the countries around the world that have supported a unified Iraq of civilization, history and sacrifice in the face of international terrorism. We appreciate their support for Iraq's unity, sovereignty and federal Constitution. We also appreciate the support for our efforts to secure federal authority throughout Iraq's territory in order to preserve the lives of all Iraqi civilians and to ensure that the security of citizens is not delivered into the hands of the military wings of certain political parties that do not support Iraqi unity but rather seek to achieve their own illegal goals and conceal their corruption, smuggling and interference in the use of the State's resources. In that regard, we affirm that our oil and gas reserves are the property of the whole Iraqi people, not of individuals or political parties claiming ownership and funnelling their revenue to private accounts. It is important to ensure federal financial oversight of all funds collected from oil resources, airports and border crossings, which must be controlled by the federal Government, in line with the Iraqi Constitution.

Despite the incitement to killing and the military mobilization by the leadership of certain parties in northern Iraq, the Iraqi Government has exercised wisdom and self-restraint, ensuring the rule of law and the orderly deployment of federal forces so as to protect the security of all citizens regardless of their race, gender, religion or sect.

Iraq looks forward to holding parliamentary and legislative elections in mid-May 2018. Preparations by the political forces that represent all Iraqis have begun. The successful holding of the coming elections on the basis of a peaceful transfer of power will strengthen the political stability of Iraq's democratic and pluralistic political system within a lasting democracy that will help Iraq resist any crises. It will strengthen the country's stability and economic development in its efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. The Council of Ministers has decided to ban any political party or entity with a military component from participating in the elections, based on the Iraqi Constitution, which prohibits the military from participating in elections.

The post-conflict phase poses a great challenge for us that surpasses even that of the war itself. We must therefore strive to re-establish stability, ensure reconstruction and rekindle hope following the liberation of our cities, achieved with enormous costs to human life and property and damage to the environment, which has been seriously degraded over the past three decades. That is in addition to the environmental terrorism perpetrated by the gangs of Da'esh, which have set fire to oil wells, ruined small dams, flooded agricultural land and destroyed artefacts and Iraq's ancient cultural heritage.

We are working for community-based reconciliation among the civilian population so that our citizens can feel reassured and the displaced can return home. The next stage will require genuine, serious cooperation if we are to prevent any relapses into terrorism and extremism. We have signed a partnership agreement with the United Nations Development Programme to promote civic and community-based reconciliation in Iraq and to enhance and promote the work of local peace committees to achieve sustainable, social peace

in the cities that have been liberated from the terrorist gangs of Da'esh.

Iraq also greatly appreciates the Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 2379 (2017), on the collection and preservation of evidence of the crimes committed by Da'esh terrorist gans in Iraq. Efforts in this area should be directed at enhancing Iraq's sovereignty, maintaining its jurisdiction and reinforce the capabilities of its judiciary in investigating serious international crimes. That will help to strengthen the rule of law, put an end to impunity for terrorists and ensure that they are punished for their terrible crimes in Iraq. This historic resolution is the result of constructive cooperation between Iraq and the Security Council. The decision to criminalize Da'esh is a victory for human justice and the organization's victims. It is also an expression of a practical rejection of the savagery of Da'esh and an effective condemnation of its uncivilized behaviour. The prosecution of these criminals, and denying them impunity, will act as send strong messages of deterrence. It will also reassure countries all over the world through the strong warning it sends to those who support Da'esh financially, ideologically or through the media. We call on Member States and international and regional organizations to help the investigative team in its work and offer it all the assistance it will need to strengthen the Iraqi legal and judicial system so as to promote the rule of law and put an end to impunity.

There is a growing need for the support that the international community has to offer, including by participating in the reconstruction of the liberated areas and the restoration of ordinary livelihoods for Iraqis as soon as possible. Moreover, as a result of the war on terrorism and the efforts that have been directed to liberation operations, other construction projects as result of the war on terror and the participation of the population in the liberation campaigns. They have also seen limited opportunities for development and an increase in the number of orphans and widows, and they must be included in any reconstruction projects. We look forward to the international community's effective participation in the donor conference to be held in Kuwait early next year, and we appreciate the genuine efforts that are being made to help Iraq and alleviate the suffering of the displaced.

We would also like to renew our call on companies in friendly States to invest in our economy, including the energy, housing, transportation and health-care sectors, as well as in the construction of schools and communications infrastructure. We want to point out that we have established laws and a legislative environment that are friendly to companies and investors.

The Government of Iraq is hoping to deepen its relationship with its regional partners for its own development and in order to enhance bilateral cooperation on issues that are important to the peoples of the region, by arriving at a joint plan to enhance general stability in the region and lower the level of conflict and the flow of terrorists, in accordance with the common interests and a vision that will positively affect the lives and security of the citizens of the region. Our Prime Minister, Mr. Haider Al Abadi, has made many constructive visits to friendly countries, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Iran and Turkey, in order to lay clearly defined foundations for cooperation in various areas so as to promote security in the region, which is indivisible.

Where Syria is concerned, Iraq welcomes the efforts by Russia, Iran and Turkey and by those who are working to arrive at a comprehensive, intra-Syrian solution acceptable to all Syrian parties. It should be eliminate terrorist gangs and cut off all international and regional support. It must also reduce the recruitment of more terrorists, which only funnels more such fighters to the battlefield. It must be a solution that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian State and helps rid it of the scourge of terrorism, destruction, displacement and murder, while ultimately achieving stability and security in the region. We greatly appreciate Kazakhstan's efforts to ensure success in the Astana talks, and congratulate its leadership on the steps that it has taken to consolidate peace and help bring together the views of Syrians under the umbrella of the United Nations.

Our relationship with our sister State of Kuwait, which has stood by Iraq during difficult times, is a close one, based on firm foundations of constructive cooperation and fraternity. Iraq is working hard to locate the missing Kuwaiti persons and prisoners and Kuwaiti archives. The most recent meeting of the relevant technical subcommittee was held in Kuwait on 8 August. The competent Iraqi authorities continue to take into consideration the legal and human aspects of the issue and to work diligently to locate the remains of Kuwaiti victims. They have been documenting and verifying information provided by witnesses and have also conducted field visits and several excavation operations in various locations in attempts to locate the

remains of missing Kuwaiti persons and prisoners. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iraq has continued to place advertisements across various media platforms, including newspapers and official television channels, aimed at encouraging anyone with information regarding the fate of missing Kuwaiti persons and prisoners to contact the competent authorities.

With regard to the report on UNAMI submitted by the independent external assessment team, the relevant Iraqi authorities have taken note of the report and will study it, especially the recommendations pertaining to UNAMI's mandate and the priorities suggested by the team, at which point we will offer our official opinion about what the Government sees as necessary in the upcoming stage, which will be one of reconstruction, aimed at strengthening and increasing Iraqi society's immunity to terrorist ideology. We hope that this reconstruction will enable us to achieve economic prosperity, the voluntary return of the displaced to their cities and secure basic services. In that regard, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation for the efforts of the independent external assessment team in compiling its report. We look forward to working with all stakeholders to identify the next steps. There will be a process of evaluating the report's recommendations in order to implement measures that will help UNAMI move forward and provide the services that the Iraqi people expect from its presence in Iraq, hand in hand with the United Nations country team.

In conclusion, we would like to once again express our thanks for the work being carried out by Special Representative Kubiš and his team in advising the Iraqi Government. We thank UNAMI for its activities aimed at preserving the unity of Iraq and its territorial integrity and stability so that it may at last be free of terrorism. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my country's deep gratitude to the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. György Busztin, for his efforts and diligence, as well as for the legacy that he has left in Iraq. We wish him every success in his future endeavours.

The President: I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.